

# IOWA BIRD LIFE



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**ANNUAL CONVENTION AT SIOUX CITY****MAY 10, 12, 1963**

BY DR. MYRLE M. BURK, SEC'Y-TREAS.

RR #2

WATERLOO, IOWA

For the fifth time members of the Iowa Ornithologists' Union traveled northwest to Sioux City for their annual convention. The Sioux City Bird Club entertained the I.O.U. in 1929, 1933, 1948, and 1955. The Nebraska Ornithologists' Union met with them at these three last conventions and the South Dakota Union in 1948 and 1955. This year, 1963, the Golden Anniversary of the Sioux City Bird Club, friends from these two states were guests at the convention.

Early comers met informally Friday evening in the Commons of Morningside College; old friends were greeted and new members were initiated into the spirit of I.O.U. Bird photographers showed their good slides of the year. Refreshments were served and Robert L. Nickolson outlined the Saturday morning field trips into Nebraska and South Dakota.

Returning from the Saturday morning trip, the bird watchers were enthusiastic about the number of Yellow-headed Blackbirds seen. The Sunday morning field trip, which was confined to Iowa, although hampered by cloudy weather and poor light, was highlighted by seeing a flock of eighty or more Yellowheads feeding in a pasture. The trip was successful with a total of 134 birds seen. Some members, led by Eldon Bryant of Akron, went to see the Say's Phoebe, which is nesting near his home.

Saturday evening, 135 members and friends doffed their hiking clothes and, attired in more conventional garb, went to the annual banquet at the Commons. The tables were attractively decorated with spring flowers and the food was equally delicious.

The Convention was proud and fortunate to have as guest speaker Dr. Ira N. Gabrielson, President of Wildlife Management Institute, Washington, D.C. From the experiences of a lifetime interest in the problems of conserving our native species, whether animal, bird, or plant, he related the development of our present problems of conservation, the obstacles hindering their fulfillment and the successes won. He emphasized the part each individual may play in saving some of our natural wildlife areas.

Myra Willis, vice-president and program chairman, called the convention to order at 10:00, May 11, 1963.

Dean Roosa introduced James Holmes, Dean of Morningside College, who welcomed the members of the I.O.U., paying tribute to Dr. T. C. Stephens, one of our charter members, who guided the organization of the present Sioux City Bird Club fifty years ago. Dean Holmes paid tribute to the members of the I.O.U. for their interest in some of God's wonders and their respect for wildlife.

In response President Roosa thanked the dean for the use of the fine building of Morningside College and complimented the Sioux City Bird Club for planning an interesting round of activities.

Following are brief notes on papers presented:

Dr. J. Harold Ennis in a "Tribute to Dr. T. C. Stephens" depicted the life of this early naturalist, ornithologist and conservationist of Iowa. In 1904 he received a degree of Doctor of Medicine; in 1906, he became a teacher in the department of Biology in Morningside College and served until 1946. Summers were devoted to research and teaching as a member of the staff of the McGregor Wildlife School. Most interesting is that he was one of the founders of the Sioux City Bird Club in 1913 and of the Iowa Ornithologists' Union in 1923. His active life ceased in March, 1948.

Mrs. John Lueshen gave a full and interesting survey of "Alexander Wilson, Pioneer Ornithologist of America", describing his early boyhood in Scotland, his apprenticeship as a weaver, and his early desire to write poetry, modeling after Robert Burns. At 28 years, accompanied by a nephew, he came to America. In Pennsylvania he saw the Red-headed Woodpecker, the first bird which he painted. He bought land in the Finger Lake area, which his nephew cultivated, while Wilson taught school to pay for the farm. In his travels he met William Bartram, and a fine friendship grew. He decided to paint the birds of America. The cost of the engravings were so high that he economized by having several birds on a plate. The pictures were all hand-colored.

A most instructive and interesting resume of "Current Conservation Legislation" was given by David Pierce of the State University of Iowa. Difficulties of conserving the Padre Island National Seashore and other similar areas arise from the necessity of ratification by the respective state legislatures. Similar problems affect the saving of the Wetlands of North and South Dakota. In the future Congress will meet with proposals to establish many national parks or monuments, the control of the use of pesticides, the maintaining of clean water, and necessity of studying the effect of detergents on the water of our streams. The desire for greater recreational wildlife areas and the protection of the habitats of our vanishing birds and other animal species are problems which conservationists will require Congress to consider.

"Food Habits of Some Owls Wintering in Iowa" was discussed by Leigh Fredrickson of Iowa State University. The consumption of mice by the Long-eared Owl, the Short-eared Owl, and the Saw-whet Owl appear to be related to the diurnal and nocturnal habits of the respective species of mice.

David Strohmeier, also from Iowa State University, discussed "Nesting of the Blue-winged Teal in Northwest Iowa". This state presents relatively small habitats for the nesting of waterfowl. Ducks show no marked preference for vegetation, but used areas available near water. Small scattered areas contribute to the production of waterfowl in Iowa.

Alden J. Erskine, past president of the Izaak Walton League of America, presented the paper "Human Habitat". He emphasized the necessity of effort by the individual toward the successful development of legislation enacted by Congress and the State Legislatures.

Fred Kent gave us valuable "Tips on Bird Photography". If any of our member photographers are found in grotesque attitudes, camera in hand, trying new angles of catching a bird on film, one may assume that this humorous paper was effective.

Dr. Robert Vane intrigued the audience with the film "Hummingbird Summer" filmed in the Killian garden of Cedar Rapids. Beautiful Ruby-throated Hummingbirds were feeding from Audubon Hummingbird feeders placed among the flowers of the garden.



## Minutes of the Business Meetings

May 11, 1963

At 3:30 p.m., Dean Roosa, President, called the assembled members of the Iowa Ornithologists' Union to order for the annual business meeting. The secretary-treasurer read the financial report for the year. Dean Roosa read a letter from Philip DuMont expressing his pleasure at being awarded Honorary Membership.

Dr. J. Harold Ennis, Librarian, reported that there are still requests for the **Iowa Distributional Check List**. He reported that the file of **Iowa Bird Life** owned by the Audubon Naturalist Society of the Central Atlantic States is now complete. The missing numbers were supplied from our supply in appreciation to Shirley Briggs, who designed the Rough-legged Hawk cover for **Iowa Bird Life** for 1962. All complete sets owned by the I.O.U. have been sold (except the permanent one). Any old copies, particularly those of Vol. 15-20, will be welcomed by Dr. Ennis in order to complete a set for Yale University.

Dr. Martin Grant, upon the request of Dean Roosa, reported on the organizational meeting of the Iowa Chapter of Nature Conservancy. The meeting was held at Ames in April. The aim of the society is to foster the preservation of pieces of native land permanently. The President of the new Iowa chapter is Prof. Gaylen Smith, Secretary, Dr. Martin L. Grant. Anyone knowing of an area which should be preserved is invited to report it to the organization. The Berry forested area in southern Iowa has been preserved through the Nature Conservancy.

Dr. J. Harold Ennis urged members of the I.O.U. to get in touch with their respective County Conservation Boards and inform them of the kind of conservation wanted. Now is the time to save any native areas. The possibilities of obtaining abandoned railroad right-of-ways was suggested.

Discussion of having a membership card for the I.O.U. was opened by the president. Moved by Wayne Partridge that the U.S. postal card be printed so that it may be cut to the size of a membership card. Seconded by Homer Rinehart. Motion carried.

The president named the following committees: Nominating: Mrs. John Lueshen, chairman, C. Esther Copp and Darrel Hanna. Resolutions: J. P. Moore, Chairman, Dr. J. Harold Ennis and Margaret Nagel.

Dean Roosa reported that Dr. Martin L. Grant has prepared an **Annotated Check List of Iowa Birds**, which will be printed in the September issue of **Iowa Bird Life**. Separates will be requested by Dr. Grant; in addition reprints to be offered for sale by the I.O.U. as designated in the following motion: moved by A. C. Berkowitz that reprints of the **Annotated Check List of Iowa Birds** be made and offered for sale by the I.O.U. to members and others. Seconded by Mrs. Lambert. Motion carried.

The fall meeting is scheduled at Waterloo for September 21 and 22. Motion by A. C. Berkowitz that the meeting adjourn, until Sunday afternoon. Seconded by Charles Ayres, Jr., Adjournment.

May 12, 1963

Following the bird hike the members reconvened at the Izaak Walton Club House, near Brown's Lake.

Dean Roosa, President, called the meeting to order; he complimented the members of the Izaak Walton League for the fine chicken dinner served us. He reported that 114 persons had registered and 135 attended the banquet Saturday evening.

J. P. Moore, chairman of the Resolutions Committee, read the following: Be it resolved that the Iowa Ornithologists' Union members express their deepest thanks to:

1. The officers of the Iowa Ornithologists' Union and the members of the Executive Committee for their excellent efforts in supervising the activities of the Union during the past year, Dean Roosa, president, Myra Willis, Vice-President, Dr. Myrle M. Burk, Secretary-treasurer, Dr. J. Harold Ennis, Librarian, and Peter C. Petersen, Jr., Editor of **Iowa Bird Life**.

2. To the Sioux City Bird Club for inviting us to help them celebrate their Golden Anniversary in such a fitting way, making special mention to Mrs. W. W. Barrett, chairman of arrangements, Robert Nickolson, Chairman of Field Trips, and Myra Willis, Chairman of the Program Committee.

3. To A. C. Berkowitz for printing the programs.

4. To Mrs. A. D. Kirkpatrick and Mrs. P. B. Davison for the beautiful table decorations.

5. To Morningside College for letting us use their newly dedicated Commons for our meetings and meals.

6. To Dr. Ira Gabrielson for being our guest speaker and enlightening us on the current events in Washington, D. C., regarding wildlife legislation.

7. To all others taking part in our program, namely, James Holmes, Dean of Morningside College, Dr. J. Harold Ennis on his "Tribute to Dr. T. C. Stephens", Willetta Lueshen on "Alexander Wilson, Pioneer Ornithologist" of America David Pierce on "Current Conservation Legislation," Leigh Frederickson on "Food Habits of Some Owls Wintering in Iowa," David Stroh-meyer on "Nesting of Blue-winged Teal in Northwest Iowa," Alden Erskine on "Human Habitat," Fred Kent for "Tips on Bird Photography" and Dr. Robert Vane for his movie "Hummingbird Summer."

8. To the Woodbury County Chapter of the Izaak Walton League for letting us conclude our meeting by lunching in their Club House at Brown Lake and the excellent dinner served.

J. P. Moore, Chairman

Margaret Nagel

Dr. J. Harold Ennis

Mrs. John Lueshen, Chairman of the Nominating Committee, presented the following nominees: President; Dean Roosa, Vice-President; Myra Willis, Secretary-treasurer; Dr. Myrle M. Burk, Librarian; Dr. J. Harold Ennis, Executive Committee; Robert Nickolson, Fred Kent, Charles Ayres. (Forrest Millikin as immediate past president is the fourth member).

Moved by Mrs. Lueshen that nominations be accepted. Seconded by Mrs. Barrett, M. C. Moved by Wayne Partridge that nomination cease. Seconded by C. Esther Copp. M.C. Vote for nominees for officers by show of hands unanimous.

Mr. Erskine again expressed pleasure of having the members of the I.O.U. as guests and invited them to return to Sioux City. Mrs. Barrett presented the bill for convention expenses, which is to be deducted from registrations fees. Moved by Peter C. Petersen, Jr. that the bill be accepted. Seconded by Myra Willis. M. C. It is understood that money received for registration fees is to cover all convention expenses; any money remaining is to be turned over to the I.O.U.

The final act of the Convention was the compilation of the birds seen during the Sunday morning hikes by Dr. Martin L. Grant.

**Attendance Register**—AKRON: Eldon J. Bryant. AMES: Michael M. Burns, Leigh Frederickson, David Strohmeier. CEDAR FALLS: Arnold R. Bolmas, Madeline D. Carpenter, Dr. Martin L. Grant, Annette Haffner, Mrs. C. B. Madsen, Neals Pedersen, Gary Schultz, Mrs. Charles Schwanke, Maxine Schwanke, Gerald Skoog, Mrs. Florence Spring, Donald Troyer.

CEDAR RAPIDS: Mr. and Mrs. Robert Vane, Myra G. Willis. CORRECTIONVILLE: Linda Richards. DAVENPORT: Mr. and Mrs. Peter C. Petersen, Jr. DES MOINES: Mr. and Mrs. Albert C. Berkowitz, Mrs. A. J. Binsfeld, Mr. and Mrs. Woodward H. Brown, Mr. and Mrs. Lester W. Haskell, Dr. and Mrs. Harold Peasley, Mrs. Tom Pettit.

ESTHERVILLE: Mrs. J. B. Osher. GLIDDEN: Robert Boes. HARLAN: Ben Peterson. HULL: Gilbert Blankespoor, Gary Van Dyke. IOWA CITY: Mr. and Mrs. F. W. Kent. LAMONI: Richard De Long. LEHIGH: Dean Roosa. MADRID: Mr. and Mrs. Wayne F. Partridge. MARSHALLTOWN: Mr. and Mrs. Homer Rinehart. MOULTON: Ann Moore. MOUNT VERNON: Dr. J. Harold Ennis.

NEWTON: Mr. and Mrs. J. P. Moore. NORTHWOOD: Mrs. John Bottelman, Mrs. Fred Oetken. OELWEIN: Mr. and Mrs. Earl Alton. OTTUMWA: Mr. and Mrs. Charles C. Ayres. PIERSON: Lavina Dragoo. SAC CITY: Bob DeLoss, Norwood T. Lambert. SHENANDOAH: Mrs. W. C. DeLong. SIGOURNEY: Mr. and Mrs. Forrest G. Millikin.

SIOUX CITY: Mrs. Helen G. Barrett, Mr. and Mrs. P. B. Davison, Mr. and Mrs. H. M. Edwards, Mr. and Mrs. Alden Erskine, Mr. and Mrs. O. A. Fisk, Mr. and Mrs. Darrell M. Hanna, Roy D. Hissong, Mr. and Mrs. Howard L. Johnson, Mr. and Mrs. Philip E. Johnson, Mr. and Mrs. A. D. Kirkpatrick, Mrs. H. T. Lambert, Mr. and Mrs. George Marsh, Margaret Marsh, Mr. and Mrs. Robert Nickolson, Mr. and Mrs. Garland Roose, Mrs. A. H. Schatz, Grace Smith, Gertrude Weaver.

SPIRIT LAKE: Mrs. B. A. La Doux. WATERLOO: Dr. Myrle M. Burk, Harriett M. Fairbanks, Hazel Fairbanks, Jim Grier, Mrs. Ruth Halliday, Mrs. Maybelle Hinkley, Margaret Nagel, Mrs. John Osness, Judy Zuber. WHEATLAND: C. Esther Copp. ALTADENA, CALIFORNIA: George E. Blinov. WASHINGTON, D. C.: Dr. Ira Gabrielson.

LINCOLN, NEBRASKA: Mrs. O. E. Jerner, Mr. and Mrs. Harold V. Whitmus, Bertha C. Winter. WISNER, NEBRASKA: Mr. and Mrs. John Lueshen. SIOUX FALLS, SOUTH DAKOTA: Mr. and Mrs. H. F. Chapman. PLATTEVILLE, WISCONSIN: Terrence N. Ingram, Robert Sedgwick. ARLINGTON, VIRGINIA: David A. Pierce. TOTAL: 114.

**Composite List of Birds Seen on the Field Trip, May 12, 1963**—Pied-billed Grebe, Great Blue Heron, Green Heron, American Bittern, Mallard, Gadwall, Pintail, Green-winged Teal, Blue-winged Teal, American Widgeon, Shoveler, Wood Duck, Redhead, Canvasback, Ring-necked Duck, Lesser Scaup, Red-tailed Hawk, Marsh Hawk, Sparrow Hawk, Bobwhite, Ring-necked Pheasant, Gray Partridge, American Coot, Semipalmated Plover, Killdeer, Golden Plover, Spotted Sandpiper, Solitary Sandpiper, Lesser Yellowlegs, Pectoral Sandpiper, White-rumped Sandpiper, Baird's Sandpiper, Least Sandpiper, Hudsonian Godwit, Wilson's Phalarope, Franklin's Gull, Forster's Tern, Common Tern, Black Tern, Mourning Dove, Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Black-billed Cuckoo, Chimney Swift, Belted Kingfisher, Yellow-shafted Flicker, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Red-headed Woodpecker, Hairy Woodpecker, Downy Woodpecker, Eastern Kingbird, Western Kingbird, Crested Flycatcher, Eastern Phoebe, Say's Phoebe, Traill's Flycatcher, Least Flycatcher, Wood Pewee, Olive-sided Flycatcher, Horned Lark, Tree Swallow, Bank Swallow,





VIEWS OF THE SIOUX CITY MEETING

TOP PHOTO — FIELD PARTY

MIDDLE PHOTO — VICE-PRESIDENT WILLIS  
AND LOCAL CHAIRMAN BARRETT

LOWER PHOTO — BANQUET SPEAKER GABRIELSON AND  
LIBRARIAN ENNIS

all photos by F. W. Kent

Rough-winged Swallow, Barn Swallow, Cliff Swallow, Purple Martin, Blue Jay, Crow, Black-capped Chickadee, Tufted Titmouse, White-breasted Nuthatch, Brown Creeper, House Wren, Catbird, Brown Thrasher, Robin, Wood Thrush, Swainson's Thrush, Grey-cheeked Thrush, Eastern Bluebird, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Cedar Waxwing, Loggerhead Shrike, Starling, Bell's Vireo, Solitary Vireo, Red-eyed Vireo, Warbling Vireo, Black-and-white Warbler, Tennessee Warbler, Nashville Warbler, Yellow Warbler, Magnolia Warbler, Myrtle Warbler, Black-throated Green Warbler, Blackburnian Warbler, Chestnut-sided Warbler, Blackpoll Warbler, Palm Warbler, Ovenbird, Northern Waterthrush, Yellowthroat, Wilson's Warbler, American Redstart, House Sparrow, Bobolink, Eastern Meadowlark, Western Meadowlark, Yellow-headed Blackbird, Red-winged Blackbird, Orchard Oriole, Baltimore Oriole, Common Grackle, Brown-headed Cowbird, Scarlet Tanager, Cardinal, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Blue Grosbeak, Indigo Bunting, Dickcissel, Pine Siskin, American Goldfinch, Rufous-sided Towhee, Savannah Sparrow, Grasshopper Sparrow, Vesper Sparrow, Lark Sparrow, Chipping Sparrow, Clay-colored Sparrow, Field Sparrow, Harris' Sparrow, White-crowned Sparrow, White-throated Sparrow, Lincoln's Sparrow and Song Sparrow. TOTAL: 134 species.

May 11, 1963; Iowa: Orange-crowned Warbler; South Dakota: Ruddy Duck, Greater Yellowlegs, Long-billed Marsh Wren.

## BANDING AT MUSKRAT SLOUGH

PETER PETERSEN, JR.

2736 E. High St.  
DAVENPORT, IOWA

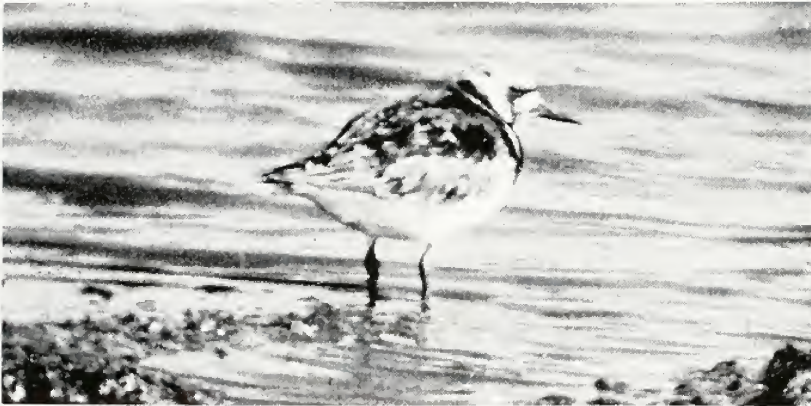
A small group of banders gathered at Muskrat Slough near Olin, Jones Co., for an excellent week end of banding on May 17-19, 1963. Weather was accommodating in the early morning and late evening hours when the wind went down and very little rain fell. The only banders present for the entire week end were the author and his wife and Mike Yeast of Davenport. George Crane of Mt. Pleasant arrived early Saturday morning and stayed until late afternoon. Robert Trial of Aledo, Illinois, and Dean Roosa of Lehigh came Saturday afternoon and Arlo Raim of Waverly on Sunday morning. Among the birders who stopped by were Fred Kent and Dr. Peter Laude of Iowa City; Arnold Arderson, Don Price and others from Davenport; and Russell Hays of Waterloo who accompanied Dean Roosa.

In about 120 "effective" net hours 152 birds were netted (effective meaning when nets were not billowed out by mid-day winds. The following is a list of all birds captured in the nets: Least Bittern-1, Blue-winged Teal-1, Virginia Rail-1, Semipalmated Plover-16, Killdeer-1, Spotted Sandpiper-3, Lesser Yellow-legs-1, Pectoral Sandpiper-5, White-rumped Sandpiper-1, Least Sandpiper-38, Dunlin-1, Short-billed Dowitcher-1, Semipalmated Sandpiper-15, Northern Phalarope-1, Black Tern-1, Yellow-shafted Flicker-1, Acadian Flycatcher-1, Tree Swallow-2, Barn Swallow-2, Cliff Swallow-15, Long-billed Marsh Wren-1, Short-billed Marsh Wren-2, Northern Waterthrush-1, Yellowthroat-8, Red-winged Blackbird-9, Common Grackle-1, In-



digo Bunting-1, American Goldfinch-1, Savannah Sparrow-4, Sharp-tailed Sparrow-1, Lincoln's Sparrow-1, Swamp Sparrow-2, Song Sparrow-1. This provides a total of 33 species and 141 individuals.

In addition to the netting many other birds were seen. Some of the more unusual were: Osprey, Yellow Rail, Black-bellied Plover, Ruddy Turnstone and Caspian Tern. The Yellow Rail was seen by the author, Roosa and Trial and was chased but eluded us. The white wing stripe was clearly seen. The authors party alone saw 106 species for the week end with only four warblers. Any bander who missed this trip lost an excellent opportunity to band shorebirds in Iowa. Walking through the mud was hard, but Bob Trial and I agreed netting rivaled some of our nights at the Cinder Flats in Chicago. Next year I hope all those who didn't make it will be with us and we can pile up an even more impressive list.



RUDDY TURNSTONE AT MUSKRAT SLOUGH

Photo by F. W. Kent

## THE MOCKINGBIRD IN NORTHWEST IOWA

WILLIAM YOUNG WORTH

3119 Second Street,  
SIOUX CITY, IOWA

While the Mockingbird is not reported every year from northwest Iowa this should not be construed to mean that this fine songbird can not be found every year. This writer knows that with a bit of extra effort Mockingbirds can be found in this area every year.

The first actual recorded nesting is one in Sioux County, reported by the late Rudolph M. Anderson, (*Birds of Iowa*-1907). However, the honor of finding this nest in more modern times goes to Mrs. W. C. DeLong, then of Sergeant Bluff, Iowa, now of Shenandoah, Iowa. Mrs. DeLong found a nest with four young on July 21, 1938, and reported it to the late Bruce F. Stiles. Mr. Stiles published the record in the *Wilson Bulletin*, 50:202. The actual site of this nest was on the George Mathers farm in Liberty Township, Woodbury County, just south of Sergeant Bluff, Iowa. Mr. Mathers told Mr. Stiles on the day of his visit that another pair was seen near the first pair.

Since that first nesting record by Mrs. DeLong, I have added a few other observations, which are given below. During early June of 1942, J. Alvin Sturtevant told me that a pair of Mockingbirds were building a nest on his farm. On June 7 we drove out to the site and found a pair trying to build a nest in a wild-plum thicket adjacent to the barn. This location was too great a temptation for the farm cats which lived in the barn and broke up the nest.

It was not until August 12, 1948, that I again encountered Mockingbirds in the general Sioux City area. A single bird was seen near Harrisburg, South Dakota, which is not far from the Big Sioux River and Lyon County, Iowa. Some very interesting observations were made on May 14, 1958, in southwest Plymouth County, just a mile or two north of the Sturtevant farm, and again along the Big Sioux River. The birds were observed to be nesting in a wild-plum thicket. The song of the male was so captivating I returned again on May 16 and May 20 just to watch the birds. A fourth trip to the area on June 16 revealed a second pair of Mockingbirds apparently nesting about one-half mile south of the first pair. On this date I also saw the first pair feeding one young bird which had left the nest.

The records become more numerous now, as I decided most of the Mockingbirds must be escaping detection. Since I usually check every wild-plum thicket for Blue Grosbeaks, I began to look further afield for Mockingbirds. On a field trip up the Perry Creek valley on June 7, 1959, I saw a Mockingbird fly out of a thicket near what was once an inland store called Adaville. On June 15, 1960, I found a pair of Mockingbirds obviously nesting on the edge of Grant Township Cemetery, near Ticonic, Monona County. On July 9, 1961, a single Mockingbird flew from a roadside thicket into the Kingsley Cemetery, near Kingsley, in southeastern Plymouth County.

The most recent record was made unknowingly by Mr. and Mrs. Harry H. Hammond, who farm in southwest Plymouth County, just west of Perry Creek. Mr. Hammond called one evening and said a strange bird had been serenading nearly every evening with the most beautiful song. At first I thought possibly an Ovenbird was nesting nearby, but when Mrs. Youngworth and I drove into the Hammond farmyard on June 20, 1962, I knew who Mr. Hammond's night singer was. A male Mockingbird was perched on the top of a nearby tree and was singing his heart out. I told the Hammonds to take good care of their singer and the pair might stay around and raise a second brood. As we stood in the warm sun on that fine June day the Mockingbird sang beautifully and finally took wing singing as it went. While not wishing to cut the attention short on our fine singer, I couldn't resist telling the Hammonds to look over their heads and listen to the song of a Blue Grosbeak. On departing I told the Hammonds the sheltered location of their farm was a bird watcher's dream. They agreed and invited us to come back at any time.

There is little doubt in this observer's mind that the Mockingbird in northwest Iowa is another of those birds which is often overlooked. We don't do enough field work, and while many farmers in this area probably see Mockingbirds every summer, they are not song-bird conscious and few of the nesting birds are ever reported. For many years Mockingbirds have been reported at various places in South Dakota. There is a specimen from North Dakota, and there are at least four reliable Mockingbird records from Saskatchewan from as far back as 1929.

Many old records of nesting or summering Mockingbirds in northwest Iowa can be found in DuMont's **Revised List of the Birds of Iowa**. The late Guy C. Rich reported several observations of Mockingbirds in 1901 and 1902 in Woodbury County. Others who reported them were A. W. Lindsay, Mrs. Marie Dales, and Charles J. Spiker.



MOCKINGBIRD AT NEST

Photo by F. W. Kent

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## HARRIS' SPARROWS AND GOLDEN-CROWNED KINGLETS

BY MRS. W. C. DeLONG

Box 398  
SHENANDOAH, IOWA

Come with me to the beautiful farm home of Fitzhugh and Hazel Diggs near Hamburg, Iowa. The view from the kitchen looking toward the west is just the ideal spot for a winter feeding station. When Hazel had her kitchen remodeled, she asked the carpenter to make a table that could be pulled out from her work bench so she and Fitzhugh could watch the birds at the feeder during their breakfast and lunch hour.

The day that I banded their birds, February 2, 1963, was a very cold day. The birds seemed to come that morning from every direction of the woods surrounding their home to feast on the goodies prepared for them. This is a perfect woods surrounding the house on the west and north. Here we find cedar trees, redbuds, mulberry and hackberry trees, tall elms, the ashes and oaks interspersed with open places and low bushes.

First to come, of course, were the usual winter birds — the Red-bellied and Downy Woodpeckers, Blue Jays, Black-capped Chickadees, White-breasted Nuthatches, Cardinals, and Slate-colored Juncos. Then from the black-berry bushes that were planted along the fence row just for the birds, came the beautiful Harris' Sparrows, some having black crowns, faces, and bibs encircling their pink bills and others with white showing on their throats. They came tiptoeing on the snow-packed ice to feed on the ground and on the log where they found seeds placed especially for them.

As we sat snug and warm by the kitchen window eating our noon lunch, we could hear them singing their clear whistle even though the temperature outside was zero. Soon they will be leaving their winter home and winding their way to the far north to build their nests and rear their young. Eleven of these Harris' Sparrows now wear bands on their right legs when they come to the feeding station.

An unusual woodpecker, not at all like the Downy or Hairy, has been coming to the suet. It is an immature Yellow-bellied Sapsucker. In the spring of the year these birds are often seen among the cedar trees, but this is the first year for a sapsucker in winter at the Diggs' feeding station. Cedar Waxwings are often seen feeding on the blue berries of the cedar trees. Even a White-crowned Sparrow came one day to feed with the Harris' Sparrows.

But the most unusual visitors of all were the Golden-crowned Kinglets that came to the long log that lies suspended by two fence posts placed near the kitchen window. Here they came to feed on the suet wedged into the crevices of the log and in the wire basket on the tree and to drink from the electrically heated water fountain beneath the log. What a sight to behold as they tipped their heads, showing the bright crown patch bordered by a black and white stripe over the eye!

Fitzhugh and Hazel's hobby is to show the slides of the birds that Mr. Diggs has photographed. They are active members of the U-Snap Camera Club and are much in demand for their wildlife program in the surrounding country of southern Iowa and northern Missouri. Many, many hours have been spent by them making sequences of the nests of our common nesting birds of Iowa in order to tell an educational story. As Mrs. Diggs expressed it to me, "We enjoy sharing our hobby with those who love the great outdoors."



HARRIS' SPARROW

Photo by Fitzhugh Diggs

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## GENERAL NOTES REPORTS

March was warm with precipitation varying from a little less than normal in the east, to slightly more than usual in the center of the state. The first half of April was warm with cool weather prevailing during the last eight or nine days. May has ranged from warm to cold with frost threatened in the north around the 20th. What began as an early spring turned out to be a rather late one. As usual, appraisals of the spring migration vary from section to section: Kent describes it as normal, and by dint of hard work and a long day was able to find 120 species on May 5. Youngworth feels there has been a scarcity of some of the usually common species, and the consensus at Des Moines is that there has been no real wave of either shorebirds or passerines. On May 21, 131 migrant passerines were netted at Davenport, the first wave of good proportion.

**Pelicans, Cormorants.** White Pelicans were at Brenton's Slough on 20 April, in a flock of 150, and a similar flock was at Goose Lake Hamilton County on 21 April. (HP). There was one at Ogden on the latter date, (JK), 40 at Lamoni on 24 April, (DG), and two at Sweet Marsh on the 28th. (RH). There was a "large concentration" at Forney's Lake on the 14th. (EG). Double-crested Cormorants were "above average." (DR).

**Hérons.** Great Blue Herons have been few, (DR), and almost none seen at Des Moines, with Green Herons equally scarce. One Cattle Egret was seen just north of Elm Lake, Wright County on 10 May (MG). Common Egrets have been rather widely seen, principally in the eastern and central sections. One was at Credit Island on 17 March, an early date, (PP), 12 at Derorah on 1 April, (FL), 12 at Lansing seen on 28 April, by Annette Haffner and Patt Lake, (RH), several at Marble Rock on 8 May, (PK), one at Lamoni on 13 May, (DG), one at Ogden on 15 May, (JK), and one near Salix in mid-May, (RN). A Yellow-crowned Night Heron near Des Moines on 3 April, was four weeks early, and two were reported from Black Hawk Park, Cedar Falls, 1 April, (MG), and Black Hawk Creek on 8 May, (RH).

**Ibis.** The very rare White-faced Ibis was found on 19 May, by Bob Nickolson in a marsh south of the Salix exit on Interstate 29. Five other Sioux City birders saw this on the same and following day. Two of the species were at the marsh on the second morning.

**Swans, Geese, Ducks.** Six Whistling Swans were found by Bob Nickolson at Badger Lake, Monona Co. on 24 April, and these were later seen by Youngworth. A flock of 40 was at Harper's Ferry on 28 March. (F). There were "excellent duck and geese arrivals through the last part of March" with 1,000 Canada Geese on 15 March, and 200 Blue and Snow Geese and 12 White-fronted Geese on 24 March. (FK). The Blue and Snow Geese at Forney's Lake on 17 March were estimated at 320,000, with numerous Mallards and Pintails. There were several flocks of Snow Geese ranging upwards to 200 at Lamoni on 25 March, (DG), and hundreds of Blue and Snow Geese at Forneys Lake on 14 April. (EG). Dean Roosa's reports of ducks are very good; Gadwall, "most ever seen," American Widgeon, "definitely up," Shoveler, "more than any previous year at Goldfield," Bufflehead, "excellent numbers each trip from 6 to 24 April," Red-breasted Merganser, "more than ever before." The peak of the Lesser Scaup migration was 24 March, when 9,000 were at Davenport. (PP). There were more than 5,000 Mallards and a similar number of Lesser Scaups at Sioux City on 25 March. (WY). There were not many ducks other than Blue-winged Teal at Lamoni. (DG). There was a good flight at Brenton's Slough on 24 March, with large numbers of the four species of geese and the ducks except Redheads, which were few, and Canvasbacks, of which none was seen.

**Turkey Vultures, Hawks.** On 7 May there was a flock of 25 Turkey Vultures at The Ledges. (DR). Red-tailed Hawks are "the fewest in five years." (DR). Red-shouldered Hawks are very scarce at Des Moines. There was a small flight of Broad-winged Hawks on 25 and 26 April. (WY). Swainson's Hawks were seen on 7 April at Waterloo, (RH), on the 26th at Lamoni, (DG), and at Ogden, (JK). An immature Golden Eagle was watched for some time on 30 April by Mrs. Margaret Brooke in Des Moines. Bald Eagles were seen on 10 March, (RH), 26 March, (WY), and on 28 March there were two immatures and one adult at Harper's Ferry. (FL). A Prairie Falcon was seen on 27 February. (WY) Russell Hays had a close-up view of a Peregrine Falcon on 10 March and saw a Pigeon Hawk the same day. The latter were also seen on 24 March, (WY), and 3 May, (PK). Sparrow Hawks are considered "above normal," (DR), but the contrary seems to be the case at Des Moines.

**Grouse, Partridge.** A Ruffed Grouse was seen at the Yellow River on 28 April by Annette Haffner and Patt Lake. (RH). A pair of Gray Partridges was found in Wright Co. (DR).





WHIMBRELS NEAR IOWA CITY

Photo by F. W. Kent

**Marsh Birds, Shorebirds.** A Yellow Rail at Muskrat Slough was seen on 19 May by Dean Roosa, Bob Trial and Peter Petersen. (see p. 33). A Common Gallinule was near Sioux City in Mid-May. (RN), another at Muskrat Slough on 17 May. (PP). At Ogden "there have been lots of Greater and Lesser Yellowlegs, Baird's Sandpipers, and Common Snipes." (JK). While the number of waders at Des Moines has not been large, there have been some unusually early observations: Greater and Lesser Yellow-legs and Baird's Sandpiper were seen a week earlier than previously, and a Stilt Sandpiper and some dowitchers were four weeks early. Three Piping Plovers were found on 5 May. (FK). A Woodcock on Black Hawk Creek on 8 May, (RH), and two found at the Des Moines Impounding Reservoir on 18 May by Dick Mooney were unusual. Snipe are "far more than usual, with six to eight seen each trip" according to Roosa who saw the mating flight and heard the "winnowing." Several Golden Plovers on 24 March were two weeks early at Des Moines, while two in winter plumage were seen on 20 March at Iowa City. A flock of 20 on 14 May were the last seen. (FK). None was seen this spring at Lamoni, due possibly to lack of moisture. (DG). Upland Plovers are reported from Lamoni on 7 April, an early date, (DG), Hamburg on 17 April. (EG), Cardinal Marsh on 6 May, (FL), and three at Ogden. (JK). A near-albino Willet was seen on 29 May, and Pectoral Sandpipers on 28 March were early. (FL). Both godwits were seen at Sioux City the week following the meeting. (RN). Two Marbled Godwits were seen 12 May. (JK). Fifteen Hudsonian Godwits were observed near Granger by Dr. and Mrs. Harold Peasley while en route to the Sioux City meeting, and a similar flock (possibly the same) was seen near Adel on the same day by A. C. Berkowitz and W. H. Brown. Three more were at the Coralville Reservoir a week later. (FK). Dr. Peter Laude found two Whimbrels on 17 May, and Kent was able to photograph them. A Northern Phalarope was collected 19 May at Muskrat Slough, (PP), and another was seen near Granger the same day. (HP).

**Gulls, Terns.** There was flight of 100 Herring Gulls 22 March. (FK). Franklin's Gulls were seen on 2 May, (WY), three on 23 April, (DG), and a small flock near Adel on 10 May. Numerous Black Terns have been seen in the Des Moines area.

**Owls, Whip-poor-wills, Swifts.** Three Barn Owls were found at Waterloo on 10 March by Mrs. Osness. A Whip-poor-will was located the same day. (RH). Two Whip-poor-wills were heard near Des Moines 18 May. (HP). Chimney Swifts have not been seen in big flocks this year. (DR).

**Woodpeckers.** "There has been an abundance of Flickers, but Downy and Hairy Woodpeckers are hard to find, and Red-headed Woodpeckers seem to be declining. (JK). There seem to be more Red-headed around Des Moines than in other recent years. Six Pileated Woodpeckers have been found in the Decorah area. (DP).

**Flycatchers.** "There may be an eastward movement of the Western Kingbird." (JK). Eastern Kingbirds are thought to be decreasing at Sioux City, (WY), but they appear numerous around Des Moines. Yellow-bellied Flycatchers, Acadian Flycatchers, and an Olive-sided Flycatcher were banded in May in Oakdale Cemetery, Davenport. Another Acadian Flycatcher was banded at Muskrat Slough. (PP).

**Horned Larks, Swallows.** Horned Larks have been numerous in Winneshiek Co. (DP). A flock of 400 Cliff Swallows on 13 and 14 May was the biggest concentration noticed. (DG).

**Jays, Wrens.** On 26 April a flock of about 120 Blue Jays was seen. (JK). A Winter Wren on Black Hawk Creek on 10 May was a late record. (RH).

**Mimics, Thrushes.** A spring record of the Mockingbird was 7 May. (PK). Catbirds appear unusually numerous at Des Moines. Robins are "plentiful in wooded areas," (DG), and no decrease in numbers has been noticed in Des Moines. Swainson's and Gray-cheeked Thrushes are "plentiful", (RH), "in unusual numbers," (DR), while 49 Swainson's and 33 Gray-cheeked were banded at Davenport. (PP). Twenty-one Veeries were banded between 6 May and 22 May at Davenport. (PP). Bluebirds "are coming back, more than in the past three years." (DR). There also seem to be more than usual in Polk Co.

**Pipits, Shrikes.** At Lamoni from one to six Water Pipits were seen frequently in April and May, (DG), and 24 March was an early date in Des Moines. The only mention of shrikes is Roosa's "poorest year yet."

**Vireos.** A report of the White-eyed in the Waterloo area comes from Mrs. O'Connell. A Philadelphia was observed on 10 May, (RH), and four were banded 13-15 May at Cedar Falls by David Rose and Martin Grant. Red-eyed were "very few," (DR), and in Des Moines the Solitary was the only vireo seen in customary numbers.

**Warblers.** There were few peaks until 21 May, (PP), but 14 May was a big day at Marble Rock with 19 warblers. (PK). It was a very poor migration at Des Moines with Tennessees the only numerous species. A Prothonotary was banded 13 May, and a Golden-winged on 20 May. (PP). A Worm-eating was seen just across the Mississippi in Wisconsin at Wyalusing on 13 May. (FL). Tennessees were thought to be scarce in Sioux City, and a small flight of Orange-crowned on 20 April were the earliest ever recorded. (WY). There were the most Parulas in four years at Goldfield. (DR). The rare Pine Warbler was seen on 28 April. (RH). A Northern Waterthrush on 6 April was an early record. (DR). A Kentucky was found by Kent on 5 May, and one was seen and heard three times in eight days in early May in Ashworth Park, Des Moines. A Connecticut was seen at Des Moines (HP) and three were banded at Davenport (PP).

**Blackbirds.** Baltimore Orioles were more common than usual at Davenport. (PP). Yellow-headed were in excellent numbers with 50 in one day at Morse Lake. (DR). One on 17 April along the Mississippi at La Crosse, Wisconsin was early. (DP). Bobolinks were fewer at Lamoni, (DG), but more than usual were seen in Polk Co.

**Sparrows, Finches.** Pine Siskins were seen daily through February and March, and suspected of remaining to nest. (WY). Five were seen on 9 March, and were seen or heard regularly until mid-May. (RH). There were a few in with large groups of American Goldfinches the last week in April. (FL). A late one was in Des Moines on 18 May. Two Common Redpolls were banded 10 March at Pleasantville by Mrs. Gladys Black. Three Le-Conte's Sparrows were found at Goose Lake, Black Hawk Co. on 18 April. (MG). Two Henslow's Sparrows were found on 29 March at Brenton's Slough by Joe Kennedy and W. H. Brown, apparently a "first" for the Des Moines area. A Sharp-tailed Sparrow was collected 19 May at Muskrat Slough, (PP), another was seen at Wyth Park, Cedar Falls on 2 May. (MG), and a third was seen on 29 May at Akron by Eldon Bryant. Harris' White-throat, and White-crowned Sparrows are "definitely up." (DR). About 100 Lapland Longspurs on 6 March was the only observation at Lamon. (DG).

Contributors: Mrs. Edwin Getscher, Donald Gillaspey, Martin Grant, Russell Hays, Jim Keenan, Fred Kent, Pearl Knoop, Fred Leshner, Robert Nickolson, Mrs. Harold Peasley, Peter Petersen, Jr., Donald Peterson, Dean Roosa, William Youngworth.

The closing dates for copy for General Notes will be changed so that each issue may give full coverage to one of the four birding seasons; nesting, fall migration, winter birds, and spring migration. Copy for the September issue covering the nesting season will close **1 August** as before, but fall migration notes may be submitted as late as **20 November** for inclusion in the December issue. Winter bird notes can be sent in as late as **25 February**, and spring migration data until **25 May**.

**Erratum:** line 2, page 19, "Sibley" read "Sidney."—WOODWARD H. BROWN, 4815 Ingersoll Ave., Des Moines, 12.

***Rhus typhina lacinata***—The above scientific name is the botanists nomenclature for the Staghorn Sumac. While this note is not a sales campaign for the Henry Field Nursery, credit must be given to the late Mr. Henry Field for having done a fine job of selling and distributing this sumac under the name of "Fern-leafed Sumac". This species of sumac is a fine addition to the home yard and while it does not afford much in the way of nesting sites for birds, it does supply food to some birds and breath-taking beauty to humans in the fall at frost time.

The bright green fern like foliage and the green flowers of summer give way to the brilliant red, gold, and orange colors of fall, with the large three to four inch drupes turning a bright crimson and so remaining until spring. These drupes are covered with crimson colored hairs and hide the small dull brown seeds. These seeds are favored by Cardinals during the winter and spring. I have seen them eating them as late as the end of March.

Migrating birds seem to have an affinity for resting in the staghorn sumac and for authenticity for this statement I can cite to the reader, one Harold Turner of Bladen, Nebraska. Mr. Turner has often written to me about observing some rare warbler or other small bird in his "Henry Field" fern-leafed sumac. In my own case I have often seen migrating thrushes pause for a rest in our sumac. Robins use the horizontal branches for daytime perches and their young often perch all day long in the nice shade of the sumac.

The most recent rare warbler that Mr. Turner reported from his sumac was on September 23, 1962, when he watched a fine Blackburnian Warbler enjoying his favorite birding tree. Every good thing must have a fault or two and the main objection to the staghorn sumac is that it sends out suckers from the roots often fifteen feet or more from the trunk. By cutting off these suckers regularly, however the tree can be kept under fairly good control.—WILLIAM YOUNG WORTH, 3119 2nd St., Sioux City.



**Grackles And Acorns**—The Common Grackle eats a great variety of food from garbage to baby Robins, but how many Iowans have ever seen them eat acorns? This scourge of the small bird world seems to eat about anything, so I wasn't too surprised one spring to see a big male grackle cracking and eating acorns.

Western Iowa doesn't have the abundance of oak trees that you folks in central and eastern Iowa are used to, so your chances of seeing acorn eating grackles are much better. The nearest stand of bur oaks is several blocks away, but leave it to a group of neighborhood Boy Scouts to supply the acorns. This group had been on an overnight hike and came home loaded down with a big supply of acorns. The next day the boys, aided by slingshots, liberally supplied the entire neighborhood with acorns. The acorns came sailing over the roof tops and lay everywhere in our yard.

An interesting account of grackles eating acorns can be found in U.S.N.M. Bulletin 211, **Life Histories of North American Blackbirds, Orioles, Tanagers, and Allies**, 1958, by Arthur Cleveland Bent. One observer, Hervey Brackbill states that the grackles crack the acorn by direct pressure of their bills and not by holding them in their feet as the Blue Jay does. This is probably true in the actual cracking of the acorn, but when the shell is cracked the grackles that I observed did hold the acorn in their feet. One grackle in particular always used his right foot to hold the acorn and then would pry away the shell and have the whole kernel before him.

Another observer, reporting in Bent, Mr. A. W. Schorger stated that after the acorn was opened none of the shell fragments were eaten, but that the whole kernel was swallowed. Again the grackles I watched seemed to handle the matter a bit differently. These grackles pounded the kernel so hard that flew into several pieces and then they would proceed to eat the pieces. In any event no matter how the grackles tackled the hardshelled acorns they did open them and apparently enjoyed the contents, as they pretty well cleaned up the acorns scattered about the lawn.—WILLIAM YOUNG WORTH, 3119 2nd St., Sioux City.

**Starling and Woodpecker Interactions**—Late in May, 1960, a neighbor phoned to report that Red-headed Woodpeckers were making a nest hole in a silver maple in her back yard. My interest was kindled at once since nesting red-heads or even sight records of them have become an unusual occurrence.

The nest excavation continued for two days with both members of the pair engaged in removing flakes and fibers of wood each time they emerged. On the third day of observation a pair of Starlings started an investigation of the nest hole, much to the consternation of the woodpeckers who protested with repetitious scoldings, head bobbing, and nervous flight from limb to limb in the nest tree. Sometimes one of the woodpeckers remained in the hole with out thrust head uttering defiant chuckles.

On the fourth day the Starlings began to enter the hole with nesting litter. The woodpeckers responded by removing the trash promptly after the Starlings left to search for more nest material. This game of bring in and take out continued through the entire fourth day. On the fifth day the woodpeckers, apparently tired of bickering with the irascible Starlings, left and never returned.

The Red-headed Woodpecker has become an uncommon bird in north eastern Iowa in the past 20 years. In the late 1920's red-heads and their sooty-headed offspring were a most common sight in towns, on farmsteads, and along roadsides. In the meantime highways were widened and roadside trees destroyed and for old farm groves, black willow fence rows and wooden fence posts gave way to chain saws and steel fence posts as a young genera-

tion of farmers began to cash in on the new prosperity of the '40's. Telephone companies and power companies developed bird proof poles for their lines. Auto manufacturers designed new high speed cars that crushed the stupid woodpeckers before they could take alarm at impending danger. In addition to this host of limiting factors was the invasion of Iowa by pioneer Starlings in the 1930's which turned into a phenomenal population explosion within five years and coincidentally there was a great decline in woodpecker numbers.

I recall seeing my first Starling on a Butler County farm in 1933. In 1934 this bird was seen in moderate numbers; by 1935 it was numerous and in 1936 the great flocks that swarmed into barns and feedlots so alarmed the residents of the county that the County Supervisors declared a ten cent bounty on every Starling head presented to the auditor for a claim. The bounty stimulated many depression impoverished students and farm boys to go after "Starling money". Armed with flashlights, tennis racquets, or wooden paddles these boys went from farm to farm and often slaughtered between ten and eighty Starlings in the outbuildings and silos of each farmstead. We had a farm hand who visited about four farms each evening and earned an average of ten dollars bounty a night; in fact he was doing so well at the Starling business that he was of little value for farm work on the following day.

Bounty claims mounted to a high figure on the County Treasurer's report and the taxpayers became alarmed. Within six months the Starlings were removed from the bounty list. The only effect of the slaughter seemed to be the provision of more space for swarms of immigrant Starlings who moved in from the overcrowded neighboring counties. The temporary thinning of the population gave every pair of Starlings a nest site and without the competition for a place to nest, each happy pair devoted all of their energies to rearing repeated broods of young. When autumn of 1937 arrived there were greater hordes of Starlings than there were before the bounty was declared.

In 1938 the "wick-wick" of the flickers and the teasing gabble of their young was still to be heard at a few of their nest trees. The Crested Flycatchers maintained their rights against the impudent Starlings who tried to take over their hollow basswoods. But the bluebirds, who formerly nested in an old telephone pole beside the lane, had yielded their claim to a pair of rowdy Starlings. The Red-headed Woodpeckers had retreated to the dense timber of the river bottom three years earlier and never returned to the farmstead again to awaken me early in the morning with their staccato drumming on the windmill fan.

The Starlings have driven away the hole-making woodpeckers and now have to fight each other for the old nest trees that are left. The law of nature is adapt, get out, or die out. The woodpeckers and bluebirds have taken the latter two courses, but I have been compelled to adapt to the raucous "churr-churr" of gray-feathered baby Starlings demanding their formula from every woodpecker hole on the place. EMMETT POLDER, Loras College, Dubuque.

**Field Survey of Northern Ontario**—The bird survey this article refers to was taken in Northern Ontario near the town of Chapleau along the Nemegos River. The survey was taken from May 25, 1963, to May 31, 1963. This is a land of nature at its best with few people and fewer roads. Scenery is out of this world with beautiful white birch mingled with dark green spruce bordering all lakes and streams. Hundreds of thousands of acres remain a

bird sanctuary the same as it was in the beginning of time. No one molests the birds during the nesting season and they are completely fearless of man. The pop of air rifles and the prowling of domestic cats are unheard in this vast land.

The trip started as a bear hunt but after seeing the various birds it soon doubled as a research trip of the bird life. The area to be reviewed should be studied by as many members of bird clubs as possible. The bird life is plentiful and the species vary from those seen in the states except during migration. All bird life is unafraid of man and will let one approach quite close. One unusual item was the lack of House Sparrows, as we know them in the Midwest. The ground nesting birds seem to be few as the land itself doesn't tend to ground nesting with marshes and many predators.

The first birds seen in Ontario were Herring Gulls literally by the hundreds. They were in the farmers fields following the plows picking up insects. These gulls were also observed deep in the bush in the lakes and streams.

There are many deserted lumber mills back in the bush and these seem to provide a favorable habitat for birds. Barn Swallows nest under the eaves of the old buildings. Various warblers nest in these areas. Even a pair of beautiful Black-bellied Plovers were observed at a distance of only 30 or 40 feet. These were probably the most beautiful birds seen. During the breeding season their black, yellow, and gold colors are vivid. It is hard to describe their true beauty.

The streams are alive with bird life. Myrtle and Yellow Warblers flit among the trees along the shores, Red-winged Blackbirds nest in the bull-rushes, various species of ducks nest in the marshes, and shore birds are along the banks.

Gray Jays, called whiskey jacks by the natives, are among the more interesting birds. They are curious and pester anything they come across. I had them come within six feet of me on bear stands and scold me vociferously. One day I observed them tease a Peregrine Falcon and eventually drive him out of the area. They will steal anything eatable, even rotten fish on bear baits. The variety of calls they make is unique. Next to a Starling they are the best imitators I have ever heard. I heard them make many sounds but each time I investigated expecting to locate a different species it turned out to be a sassy whiskey jack. The immature are dusky gray with adults basically slate gray and white.

One day while on a bear stand I heard a frantic quacking sound. Soon a pair of Mallard flew over my head and right behind them was a Peregrine Falcon. I've hunted ducks for many years but never knew Mallards could fly so fast. They raced down the cove and soon only one returned so I surmise that the falcon killed one.

The following birds were identified: Common Loon, Great Blue Heron, Green Heron, Yellow-crowned Night Heron (? ed.) Mallard, Gadwall, Hooded Merganser, Broad-winged Hawk, Peregrine Falcon, Spruce Grouse, Ruffed Grouse, Killdeer, Black-bellied Plover, Herring Gull, Nighthawk, Ruby-throated Hummingbird, Belted Kingfisher, Yellow-shafted Flicker, Pileated Woodpecker, Red-headed Woodpecker, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Hairy Woodpecker, Downy Woodpecker, Eastern Kingbird, Tree Swallow, Barn Swallow, Gray Jay, Blue Jay, Common Raven, Common Crow, Black-capped Chickadee, Robin, Starling, Yellow Warbler, Myrtle Warbler, Yellowthroat, House Sparrow, Bobolink, Red-winged Blackbird, Common Grackle, Brown-headed Cowbird, Purple Finch, and Slate-colored Junco.



Several birds were sighted but not identified: A water frequenting bird, dipping motion, brown streaked breast with an orange bill. (Probably a Spotted Sandpiper, ed.) Several wrens were seen in the bush but I could not identify them positively. There are many of the warblers and sparrows which could be identified if one had the time and powerful glasses. An expert in bird calls could easily recognize as many more as I've listed as you can hear them in the thick brush but never see them. This is the land to study bird-life but one must be careful of bears as one killed a man near the area described in this report. It is advisable to carry a rifle and stay close to your boat.—RUSSELL L. BIRKHEAD, 4023 Crestview Drive, Cedar Falls.

**Robins Eating Whole Staghorn Sumac Drupes in Spring.**—Often, while studying the "*Life Histories of North American Birds*," by A. C. Bent, I come across the terms "rubbish" or "debris" when reading in the sections entitled FOOD. I have often wondered about the terms, since no explanation was ever given for the reports of ground-up vegetable matter and rubbish, even though some accounts reported over 9 per cent of the stomach contents to be this material.

After many years of observation of the food habits of wild birds, I have arrived at some definite conclusions on the subject. These will be stated below. We know that domestic pigs enjoy an occasional troughful of coarsely ground, soft-coal screenings and will crunch and grind the coal into a size to swallow. Domestic cats and dogs eat considerable quantities of green grass and tender leaves to relieve toxic conditions built up in their bodies by civilized diets. Their wild brothers also eat some vegetable matter, but they also include great quantities of feathers, hair, bones and the like to help rid themselves of autotoxins. Why shouldn't birds do the same to help themselves?

In spring after heavy rains angleworms come to the surface. At this time Robins literally stuff themselves with this form of food. Their next stop will be a nearby fern leaf sumac where they will feed heavily on the entire drupes. These drupes are densely covered with short, fine hair. If there is a lining of soil or mud left in the Robin's stomach from the heavy diet of earthworms, I can't think of any other natural object that would collect mud as well. It is, of course, an easy matter for a bird to regurgitate a few mud-covered pellets.

For many years it was only Robins that I happened to see eating the sumac drupes. But on May 14, 1958, after a heavy rain, I noticed a Swainson's Thrush feeding on angleworms on the sidewalk and then flying up into the sumac tree to gobble the whole drupes.

Possibly birds suffer from other gastronomical upsets, for which nature provides the remedy. At least that is my theory after watching a Blue Jay on a hot August afternoon. This jay flew into one of our arbor vitae trees and proceeded to stuff himself with the green cones. He jerked off and swallowed five or six of them and flew off to let nature take its course. These small cones vary from one-third to one-half inch long and are about one-fourth of an inch in diameter. Several of them would give a Blue Jay quite a crop full of some sort of antidote!

For years I have watched Robins swallow the drupes of this shrub and have often counted the numbers eaten in one sitting. The average is nine or ten, but one male Robin on April 23, 1963, ate 34 drupes without stopping and finally flew away.—WILLIAM YOUNGWORTH, 3119 East Second Street, Sioux City, Iowa.



LONG-EARED OWL

Photo by F. W. Kent

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## BOOK REVIEWS

**The Migration of Birds** — Jean Dorst — Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, 1963 — cloth, 476 p. with 131 black and white maps, tables and charts — \$6.75.

This book is a translation of Dr. Dorst's 1956 French edition of the same title. The author has enlarged his manuscript to include recent research work. The chapter on North America has been completely rewritten. This is doubtless the most complete work available on world-wide migration. To quote Olin Sewall Pettingill, Jr., "The book should be in the library of every ornithologist, amateur or professional."

Dorst begins with a brief historical account of various explanations of bird migration which have been advanced through the ages. The reader is then briefed in the various methods of studying migration, including general field observation, lunar and radar observation, and banding. About one third of the book is devoted to migration in various geographic areas—Europe, Northern Asia, North America, the Southern Hemisphere and Intertropical Regions. Many specific examples of migration patterns are illustrated and explained. A chapter is devoted to sea-bird migrations. In the chapter entitled "Modes of Migration," the author breaks down his subject into components of routes, speeds, altitude, effect of winds, weather conditions and behavior. Brief chapters are devoted to invasions and hibernation. The chapter on physiological stimulus is amazingly readable and gives an excellent insight into the work done on gland effects. Orientation is discussed and the methods of study are outlined. Several theories for the origin of migration are presented. The author concludes that "Migrations, like birds themselves, are multiple and involve a number of very different elements which cannot be reduced to a rigid formula."

Very, very few errors were noted and all were of a minor nature. The bibliography covers fifty-two pages and lists all papers of importance published from 1930-1960 on this subject. Some of the text was condensed in "Secrets of Migration" which appeared in recent issues of **Audubon Magazine**, ed.

**Mark Catesby, The Colonial Audubon** — George Frederick Frick and Raymond Phineas Stearns — University of Illinois Press, Urbana, Illinois, 1961 — 137 p., 16 illus. — \$5.00.

For the first time an entire book is devoted to the man who was America's first true field naturalist in the fullest sense of the word. Mark Catesby (1683-1749) is a man about whom comparatively little was written before this biography. He is best known for his two volume work entitled **The Natural History of Carolina, Florida, and the Bahama Islands** (first edition 1731-43). This work was imitated in many ways by both Wilson and Audubon, a further tribute to Catesby. He collected many specimens in America for the natural history collections of Europe, describing many new species for Linnaeus.

The drawings reproduced indicate that Catesby was a fair artist. They are somewhat diagrammatic, but the detail is generally good. A color plate well reproduced from one of the original hand-colored folio editions of his book would have added considerably more in the opinion of this reviewer. It is also regrettable that such a large upper margin was included—apparently this was done to establish a better page size for the plates.

One whose library contains a section on biographies of pioneer ornithologists will want to add this volume. Catesby can truly be called the "founder of American ornithology" and it is due time a volume chronicals his life completely. ed.



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The central design of the Union's official seal is the Eastern Goldfinch, designated State Bird of Iowa in 1935.

Publications of the Union: Mimeographed letters, 1923-1928: "The Bulletin," 1929-1930; "Iowa Bird Life," beginning 1931.

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